MARK
SHEPPARD
INTERVIEW

# DEAL or NO DEAL

Words: Nicholas Knight

# MARK SHEPPARD INTERVIEW

If you watch any television shows outside of *Supernatural*, chances are you already knew who Mark Sheppard was before his *Supernatural* debut, from his roles in series like *Battlestar Galactica*, *Dollhouse*, *Leverage*, *24*, and *Warehouse 13*.

Whatever character he's playing, the talented actor always gives a memorable performance, and his entrance into the world of *Supernatural* in *Abandon All Hope* was indeed a scene fans won't soon forget. Sheppard shared his thoughts with us on the pivotal role of the Crossroads Demon known as Crowley...

***The Official Supernatural Magazine*: What was it that drew you to acting in the first place?**

**Mark Sheppard:** My father [William Morgan Sheppard] is an actor, and I grew up around the idea that acting was just an intrinsic part of our storytelling culture. We have an Irish background in our family, and that culture is a culture of self-perpetuation through storytelling. I've been a musician most of my life, and I don't find much difference between music and acting as far as the actual storytelling. It's just something I like to do. I think telling a story is one of the greatest forms of entertainment.

**From early on in your career, with your fiery appearance on *The X-Files*, you've done a lot of fantasy and science fiction genre shows. Is that a coincidence, or are you a fan of the genre?**

I've always been a fan of sci-fi because it speaks to the imagination. It's the examination of history translated into possibilities for the future, which I think is very grabbing as a story. Fantasy is fantasy – it's one of the greatest aspects of storytelling. I've been very lucky to be involved with some rather extraordinary storytelling in the sci-fi genre.

**With being on all those great genre shows, your talent must be renowned throughout the industry, so did you still have to audition for the role of Crowley, or did they just call you up and offer you the job?**

It's an interesting thing. I knew Kim Manners very well over the years. We did *M.A.N.T.I.S.* together. I've spent a lot of time in Vancouver because of the other shows that I've done, and we'd always be in a bar just talking, and he was always telling me about how much fun *Supernatural* was and just how much fun it was to actually do the show. And I could see how excited and happy he was to be a part of that. We were always talking about the possibility of getting Eric Kripke and the others to get me on the show. An opportunity arose and I was willing to come in and audition for the role. It wasn't written for me, but it was something I was willing to audition for. I read it and liked it and said, "Absolutely! I'll go in and do it." Reading the teaser I was like, "Well, *that's* the way to make an entrance! If it starts this way, it's going to be a very interesting episode." With Mark Pellegrino as Lucifer, you've got a very strong actor in that role, and anybody that goes up against him is gonna have an awful lot of fun. So I jumped at the opportunity. I was nicely surprised at just how fun it was for me. It's nice to go to work in that manner and have people who really want to do the best that they can. I was a little sad that I didn't get to do it during Kim's time, but very reverential of

that. It made me think about him a lot. His impact was definitely felt.

**Did you watch *Supernatural* before becoming a part of it?**

Of course! A lot of my friends have been on the show. I've not been an avid watcher, but I've seen the show in its incarnations over the seasons, and I've always liked it. It's fun. I think the boys are great. They're fascinating to watch. They're very good at what they do, and they make it a lot of fun to work on, which shows in [each episode], because it gives it a great underlying sense of humor. With the jeopardy, the surreal aspects, and the supernatural content itself, the humor is a very large aspect of the show. It's a lot of fun to play with.

*Supernatural* is in year five now. That's amazing! The show endures for a very specific reason – it's eminently watchable. It's very well-written and it's a lot of fun. I was watching the game show episode [*Changing Channels*] the other night and was laughing my butt off! I couldn't get over the ski boots. It's a wonderful show.

**Describe the character Crowley and his personality.**

Absolutely not! That's for me to know and for you to find out. I'll talk about Crowley until the cows come home... apart from talking about Crowley. I would never do Crowley the injustice of trying to explain who he is. I mean, can you ever really be sure what a demon's about? But I think he will definitely emerge as his position continues... if, of course, it does continue…

"I WOULD NEVER DO CROWLEY THE INJUSTICE OF TRYING TO EXPLAIN WHO HE IS. I MEAN, CAN YOU EVER REALLY BE SURE WHAT A DEMON'S ABOUT?"

**Did you go back and watch any of the past performances of the people playing Crossroads Demons?**
I've seen a couple. I won't say who or what, but I've definitely seen a couple. I've done my research and I think it's very fascinating. I made sure I got a look at what was going on recently – where I fit in.

**After seeing those past Crossroads Demons, what did you try to bring to your performance to make that particular type of demon your own?**
I don't make it my own – it's Crowley! Crowley's Crowley. What Crowley is and what Crowley will become and what Crowley's position is will have to emerge as far as the storytelling's concerned. How I feel about it is almost irrelevant. He's a multilayered, complex character. He might not be what he appears to be...

**In *Time is on Our Side*, which is apparently when Bela gave Crowley the gun, Bela said Lilith holds all the contracts for people who sell their souls to the Devil. Lilith was killed at the end of last season, so is Crowley in charge of the crossroads dealings now? Is he reporting directly to Lucifer, or what?**
That's an amazingly good question...

**But you're not going to answer it?**
Absolutely not! If I know, why would I give away what I know, and if I don't know, why would I guess? What excites me is the fact that you realize that there is a lot more to Crowley than meets the eye.

**Don't suppose you'll tell us if you're coming back for more episodes?**
One would assume that there is far more to Crowley to come. That's one of the interests to me of taking the role; to find out where it's going. All I can say is that you got a very interesting dynamic going on right now with what is happening with Lucifer and what is happening with the boys, and we shall definitely see where that heads.

**Assuming we're going to see him again, do you think Crowley will turn other demons against Lucifer?**
There is no reason for us to believe that he couldn't. It should be fascinating to see what Crowley does next. I think it's going to unfold in a very interesting manner. Ruby [and the revelation of her true character] was a very clever unfolding. I think the journey was far more interesting than anything else [for that character], so now you understand why I don't want to answer about Crowley's position.

"HE'S A MULTILAYERED, COMPLEX CHARACTER. HE MIGHT NOT BE WHAT HE APPEARS TO BE..."

**What was your favorite scene from *Abandon All Hope*?**

The intro was certainly a bit of a shocker. It's not often that I get to kiss a man on the crossroads! But it took us a long while to get the scene. I think the actor, Harvey Gold, was very brave in that way. The poor man had to kiss me for many, many hours. It must've been extremely nerve-wracking for him. Harvey was wonderful. I felt for him greatly!

**Did director Phil Sgriccia make the kissing scene comfortable for you?**

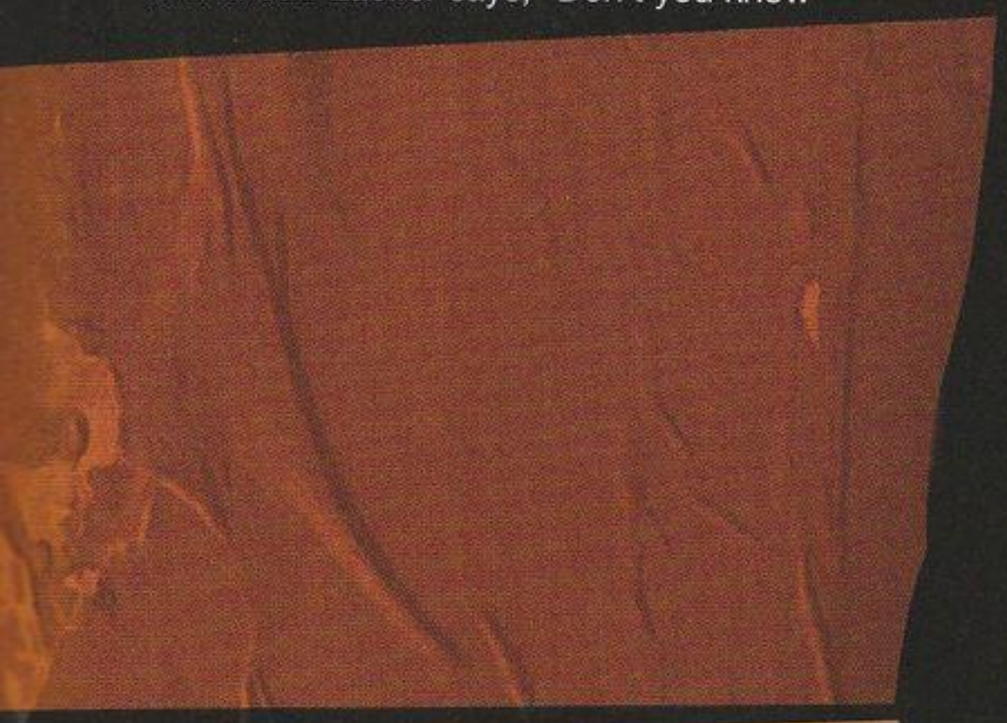
Phil made it as difficult as he possibly could! Phil made sure there were hundreds of takes from hundreds of angles. And it was six hours of kissing the guy, so I got chapped lips... There'll be deep psychological scarring for both of us. And I didn't even get dinner out of it, which makes it worse!

**Do you have a favorite line of dialog from *Abandon All Hope*?**

Yes. It's actually the response to me saying, "You two at best are functional morons." To which Jensen looks at me and goes, "Yeah, you're functioning– morons." I had a really hard time getting past that without cracking up. There's some lovely witty stuff in that scene; some very funny bits. There's a lot of me speaking, and it was fun to play with the boys.

**Is there anything else you'd like to say about Crowley?**

There was a definite sense of the inevitable, as though I'd been paying attention, that Crowley had been waiting his turn, waiting for his chance. The question, of course, is going to be: did Crowley know that the Colt doesn't work against Lucifer, or did he just assume that it would? That's the question in my mind that we're probably going to have to find out. Lucifer says, "Don't you know



"THE QUESTION, OF COURSE, IS GOING TO BE: DID CROWLEY KNOW THAT THE COLT DOESN'T WORK AGAINST LUCIFER, OR DID HE JUST ASSUME THAT IT WOULD?"

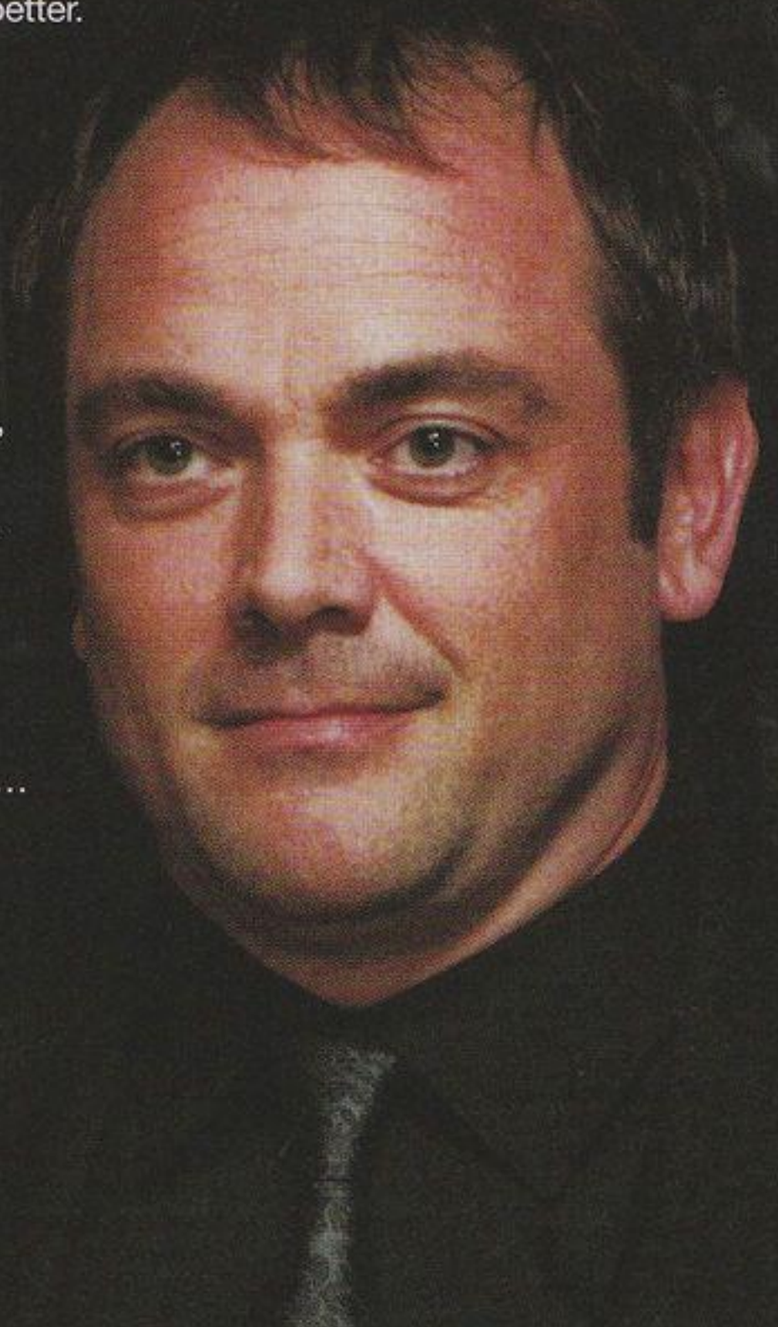
that there are five people that the Colt doesn't work with?" Do you think that Crowley did or didn't know this? If he does know it, that would make it interesting. And if he doesn't, then how are the boys going to treat him the next time they see him? It certainly will raise a big question when that comes around. I think that's the real crux here: does Crowley believe that the Colt will work against Lucifer, or does he know that it won't? If you can answer that question, you might have an idea where Crowley's going. When we've worked that out, we'll understand Crowley a lot better.

**Are there any behind the scenes stories that you'd like to share about working on *Supernatural*?**

I broke the Colt! An incredibly expensive prop... It's an old weapon. It's a beautiful weapon, but it's a true-to-form old weapon. It has no trigger guard. Those guns are notorious for having bad springs, and I broke a spring while we were in the middle of it. It's always been such an iconic part of the show… and I literally broke the gun!

**Is there anything else you can share with the fans?**

It's always about the fans. What Eric and the rest of the guys do is for the fans; it's not an indulgence just for ourselves. It's very much designed and created for the fan base. It's important that these characters resonate within the world that's been created. It's very important that they resonate in that way. I hope that Crowley resonates in that world, because it's a hell of a fun world to watch. I can't wait to do it again!



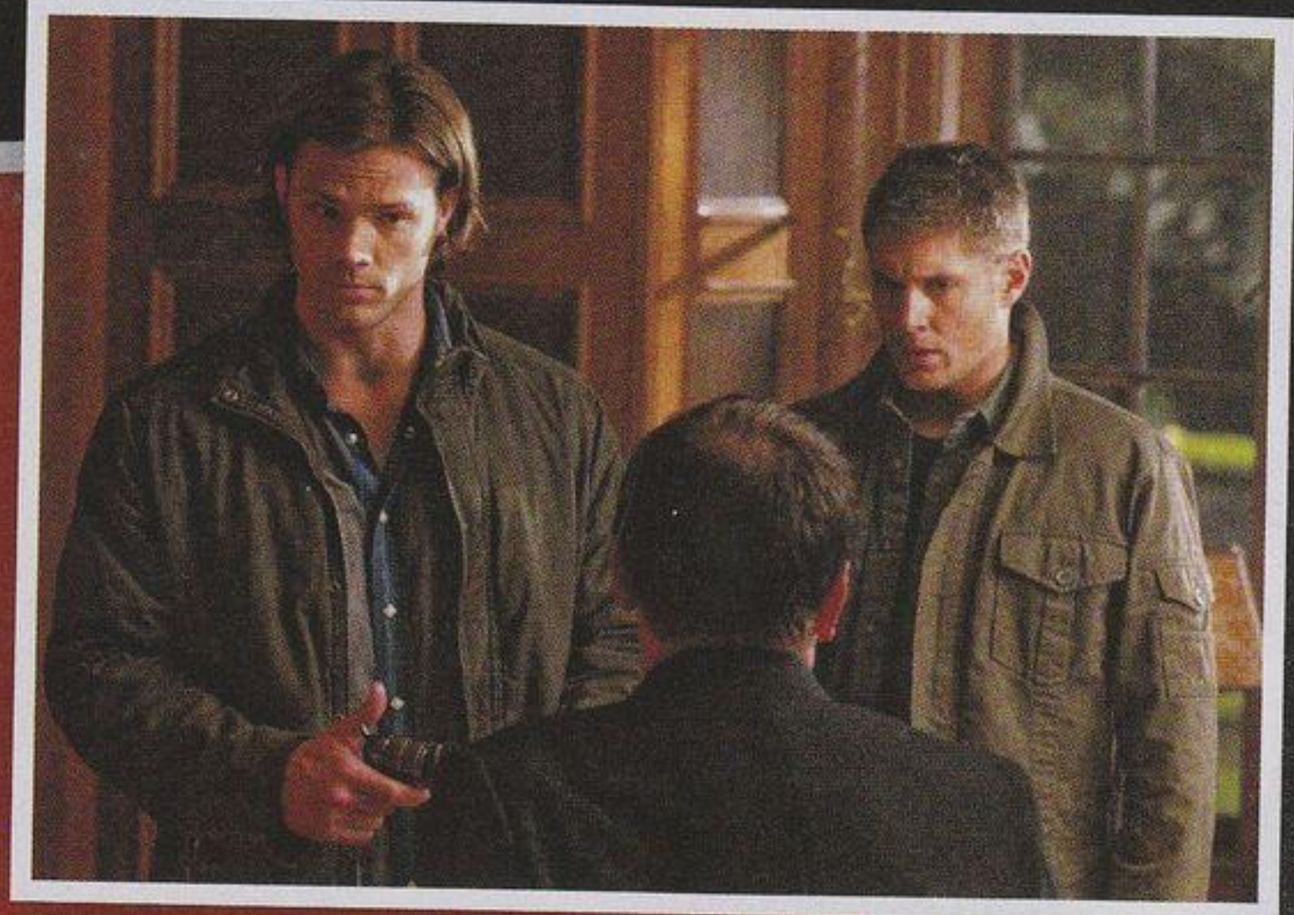
Words:
Nicholas Knight

# SEALED WITH A KISS

**Considering he's a demon, he owned Bobby's soul, and more than a little manipulative, we should really hate Crowley. However, this witty Crossroads Demon has fast become a favorite with *Supernatural* fans. *The Official Supernatural* Magazine caught up with the actor who plays this silver-tongued devil, Mark Sheppard...**

***The Official Supernatural Magazine*: Crowley is an evil demon, yet he fought against the Devil, and therefore in a way is one of the good guys. He's the perfect example of someone we love to hate, or secretly love to love. From your standpoint, what's the fan response been like for Crowley?**

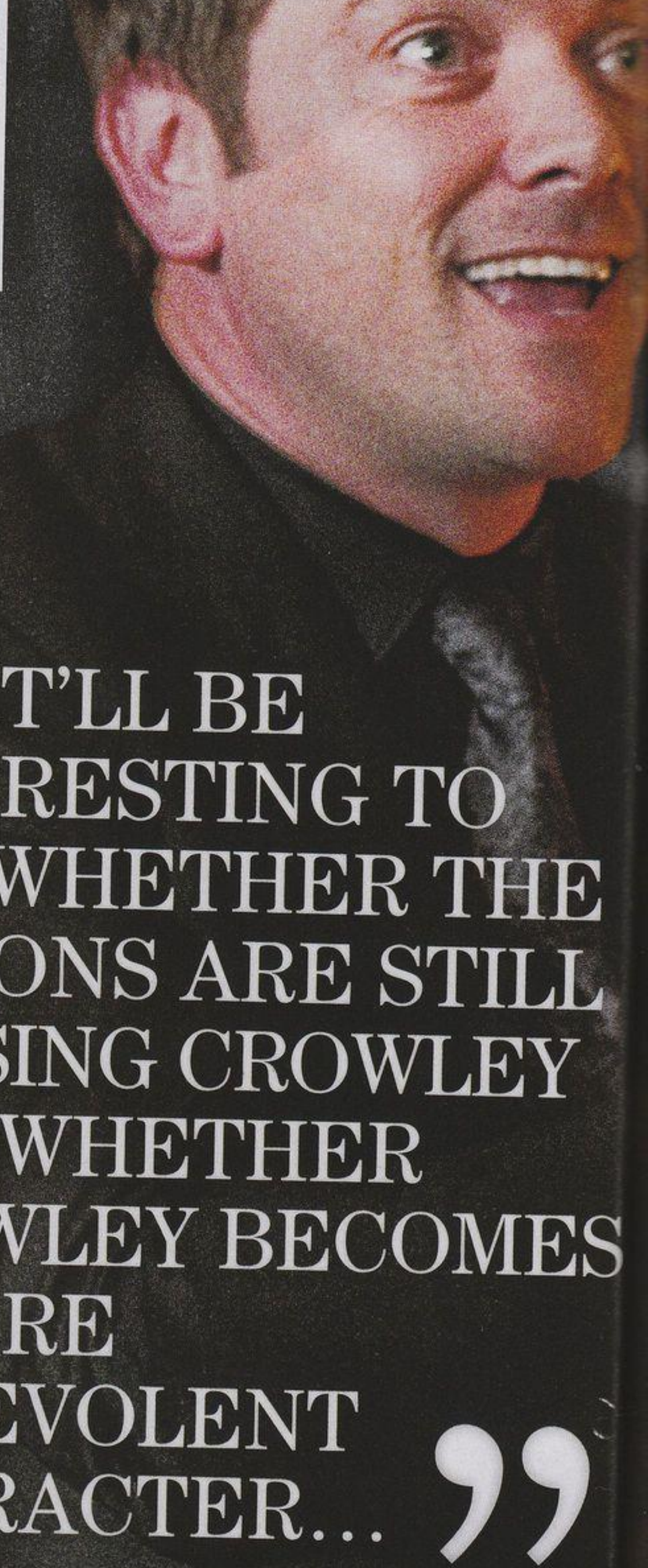
**Mark Sheppard:** The fan response to Crowley has been amazing. It's just been extraordinary. Twitter traffic has been crazy. It's been a great joy to me. I read a lot of the stuff that went online about episode 520 [*The Devil You Know*], and the fans seemed to really respond well to it. The end scene of 520, where I get shot by Bobby with rock salt and I tell him it's just a soul, give me your soul, and we fade to black, is actually a scene that was shot for 521 [*Two Minutes to Midnight*]. I thought it was a fabulous piece of editing, because 520 was just packed as it was. It was amazingly big, and I think the fans really liked that episode.



**When we spoke last, you said your favorite scene in *Abandon All Hope* was your introduction, where you kissed Harvey Gold. How did kissing Jim Beaver in *Two Minutes to Midnight* compare?**
He was less sweaty than the other guy, which was great. Jim's not a bad kisser, let's put it that way, but he needs to shave a bit. I feel bad for Jim, though. I had the advantage from doing *Abandon All Hope*, because it's a very odd thing to do. It's such a not-sexy thing to do in that context. I'm not saying Jim isn't a sexy man, but he just doesn't happen to be my cup of tea. Director Phil Sgriccia just kept milking it. "Oh, I need to do another. Oh, hold on." We were cracking up, because he got us to kiss for, like, four minutes. There's some great stuff on the gag reel. I think it's a superbly written moment. It's perfect for Crowley. Part of the fun for Crowley is seeing how uncomfortable he can make [someone else].

**It must have been pretty uncomfortable for Crowley when Bobby shot him!**
Getting shot was fun! I did the stunts on that. [Stunt coordinator] Lou Bollo was pulling me around with a pull rope. We blew apart some Ted Baker suits, which was really sad for me, because Ted Baker is in fact my tailor.

**Did you suggest Ted Baker suits for the show?**
The costume designer [Diane Widas], who is fantastic, said, "You're a Ted Baker boy, aren't you?" She liked Ted Baker's stuff, so she was able to incorporate that with her own flair to bring something extra to it. "They ate my tailor" is actually a funnier line to me


"IT'LL BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHETHER THE DEMONS ARE STILL CHASING CROWLEY AND WHETHER CROWLEY BECOMES A MORE BENEVOLENT CHARACTER..."

than you could possibly know! When Bobby first shoots me, originally I pulled the pocket square out of my pocket, and it was folded so many times that it literally had 128 bullet holes in it. It was very funny. But every time, I'd be like, "Aw, that's another suit, and I really liked this suit!" So the line, "I *liked* this suit" was true, genuinely true.

**Crowley has some great lines – do you have a favorite?**

My agent loved, "In the flesh of a moderately successful literary agent out of New York." He thought that was the greatest line of all time.

"Where's your moose?" is one of the best lines I've ever had to deliver. Poor Jared! I got moose and "Gigantor" out in two episodes, which I thought was very funny. There have been so many fun Crowley lines. "They ate my tailor" is one of the greatest lines I've had written for me.

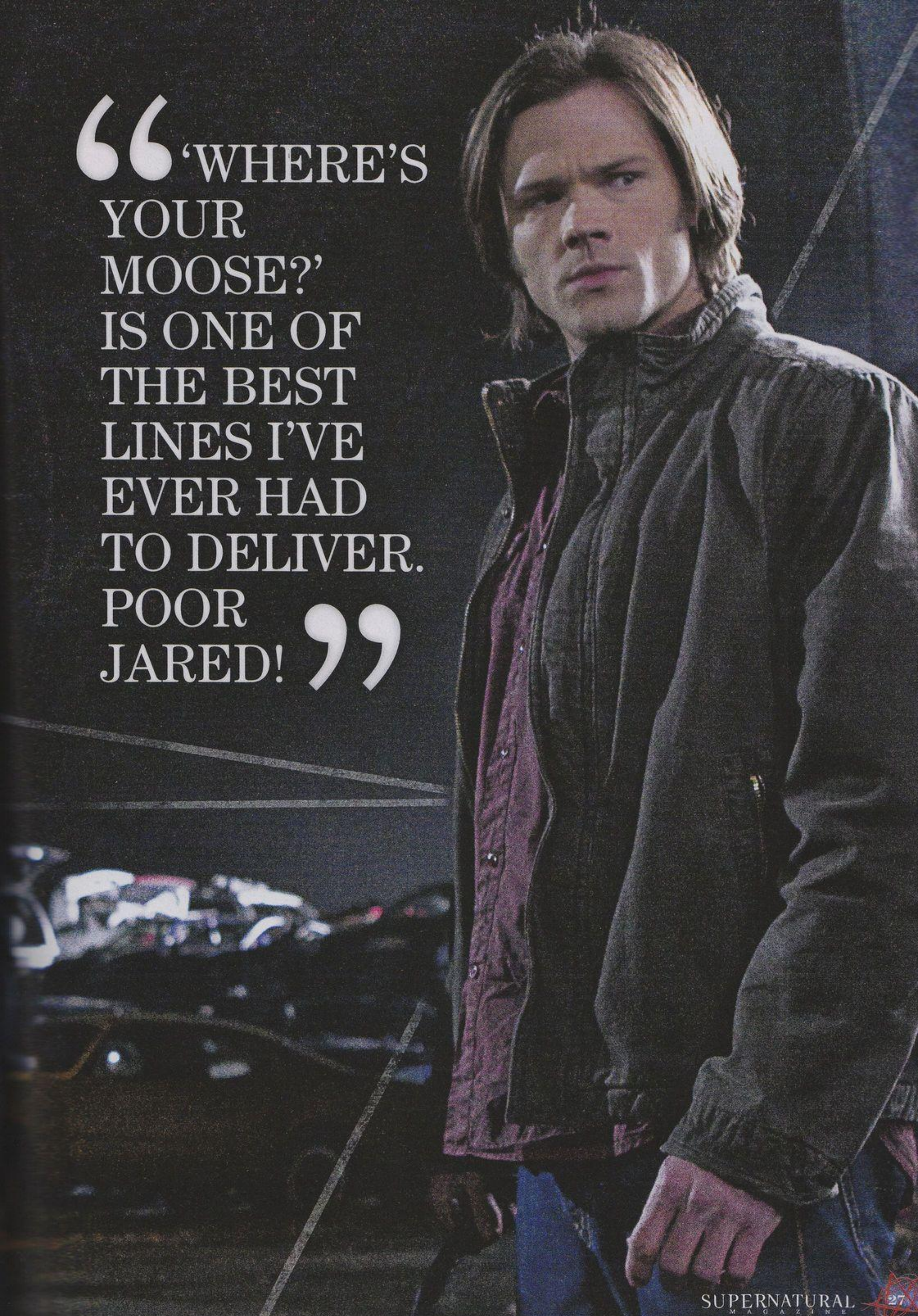
*Supernatural* is really well-written; both Ben Edlund [*Abandon All Hope* and *The Devil You Know*] and Sera Gamble [*Two Minutes to Midnight*] wrote really taut dialogue. All the writers and directors I've worked with on *Supernatural* are people that never cease to help me with what I'm doing with my character. They really create a place where we can make this something very special.

**Were there any great lines you had that didn't make it into the final cut?**

When you see the gag reel, Jim Beaver's got a great line in there. We kept changing the whiskey that I pull out [in *Two Minutes to Midnight*]. I'm like, "Do you have anything better than this?" And he says, "Yeah, it's a bottle of Old F-You under the sink." It was hysterical!

And there was a gag that was written in the script that was fantastic. When Dean and I are sitting outside Niveus Pharmaceuticals in the Impala and Dean thinks the people in the lobby are demons, and I say, 'Nah, human shields. The demons are up top. 12th floor." The script had "23rd floor." Well, the 23rd floor is the great gag floor from the writers' room of *Your Show of Shows* – Sid Ceaser, Danny Simon, Neil Simon, Woody Allen, Larry Gelbart, all those great writers that worked on the 23rd floor. So it was a great gag to have the demons being on the 23rd floor,

INTERVIEW
MARK
SHEPPARD


“‘WHERE’S YOUR MOOSE?’ IS ONE OF THE BEST LINES I’VE EVER HAD TO DELIVER. POOR JARED!”

INTERVIEW
MARK
SHEPPARD

# “PART OF THE FUN FOR CROWLEY IS SEEING HOW UNCOMFORTABLE HE CAN MAKE SOMEONE ELSE.”

but we had an elevator that only had 12 buttons so we had to change it to the 12th floor. I hit the 12th floor button and Dean's like, "You're not coming?" And I'm like, "Oh, no, it's not safe up there. There's demons." I love that stuff! It just cascades – it's lovely dialogue to read.

**Another fun bit of dialogue in *The Devil You Know* is when you talk about bringing your own Hellhound into the fight and how yours is bigger than the other one. They used stuntmen covered from head to toe in green to help with the Hellhound effects – was it a little strange working with those green guys?**

I love that line and the patting of the dog, but I'm not patting a man in a green suit, trust me, I'm patting the air. It would be very weird getting him out just for that shot. But it is great to watch them do their stunts. It's a very surreal experience, because you watch them crashing through things and it's serious, complex stunt work, but then they CG them out and it's the absence of them that makes things look so interesting. I think *Supernatural*'s visual effects department is just amazing. For the amount of money they have, they present a fabulous weekly visual delight. It's pretty hardcore.

**Hardcore pizza lovers rave about Chicago's famous deep dish pizza. Even Death**

**likes it! Have you ever eaten pizza in Chicago?**

Yes, I have. It absolutely lives up to its reputation. Their pizza pie *is* pie. It's great stuff. My favorite part of the series so far is at that pizza parlor. It's the moment when Dean realizes just what he's got into when the scythe heats up and Dean lets go and then Death speaks, and he's like, "Oh, crap, this is not going to be quite as simple as I thought it was going to be." It was just a brilliant moment. Dean's sitting there thinking, "I'm dead. This is *Death* and I'm dead. Why did I ever listen to Crowley?" And then Death goes, "I have a proposition for you..." It's just not what you'd expect, and that's what's great about *Supernatural* – it's so much more than people expect it to be.

**With the reputation it's built for itself, it seems like anyone working on *Supernatural* can expect to have a great time.**

The fun that is had is outrageous. As a place to go to work, it's so much fun. There's just a great amount of camaraderie.

I was shooting during the Vancouver Winter Olympics, and we were the only show that was shooting through the Olympics because we don't generally shoot downtown in Vancouver. That translated to us being on set where the producers and everybody tried to engineer lunches to fit around the hockey games to make sure that the Canadians could get to see some of the greatest hockey that's ever been played. Jensen was even walking around wearing a Canadian hockey shirt for a week. Because of the Olympics, there were no rooms in any inns anywhere, so they had to rent me an apartment. I was sitting there watching the hockey final in downtown Vancouver with all the windows open. Every single time there was a play I could hear the entire city speak. "*Ooh. Ahh.*" It was the most amazing time to be there.

**Looking forward to season six, what do you think is next for Crowley?**

I think he needs his own show! Called "Oh, Crowley!" I'm fascinated to see where they go from this point. And where are they going to start next? Are they going to jump forward? Are they going to jump backward? Are they going to jump sideways? Or are they just going to continue? I'm looking forward to it. I think there's a lot more fun to come from Crowley. They're gonna have to resolve the Bobby/Crowley issue. How does Bobby get his soul back without giving up [the use of] his legs? Presuming we're coming back into a season that exists in normal time and continues from where we were, it'll be interesting to see whether the demons are still chasing Crowley and whether Crowley becomes a more benevolent character or not, or whether he becomes another sidekick or something. But I don't think it's going to be that simple, do you? It can go anywhere. That's the thrill. To speculate would diminish the fantastic surprises that I'll have just from picking up the scripts and reading them. It's so much fun to play in that world, and I hope I get to do it again.

CRO
GU

# WLEY'S DE TO LIFE

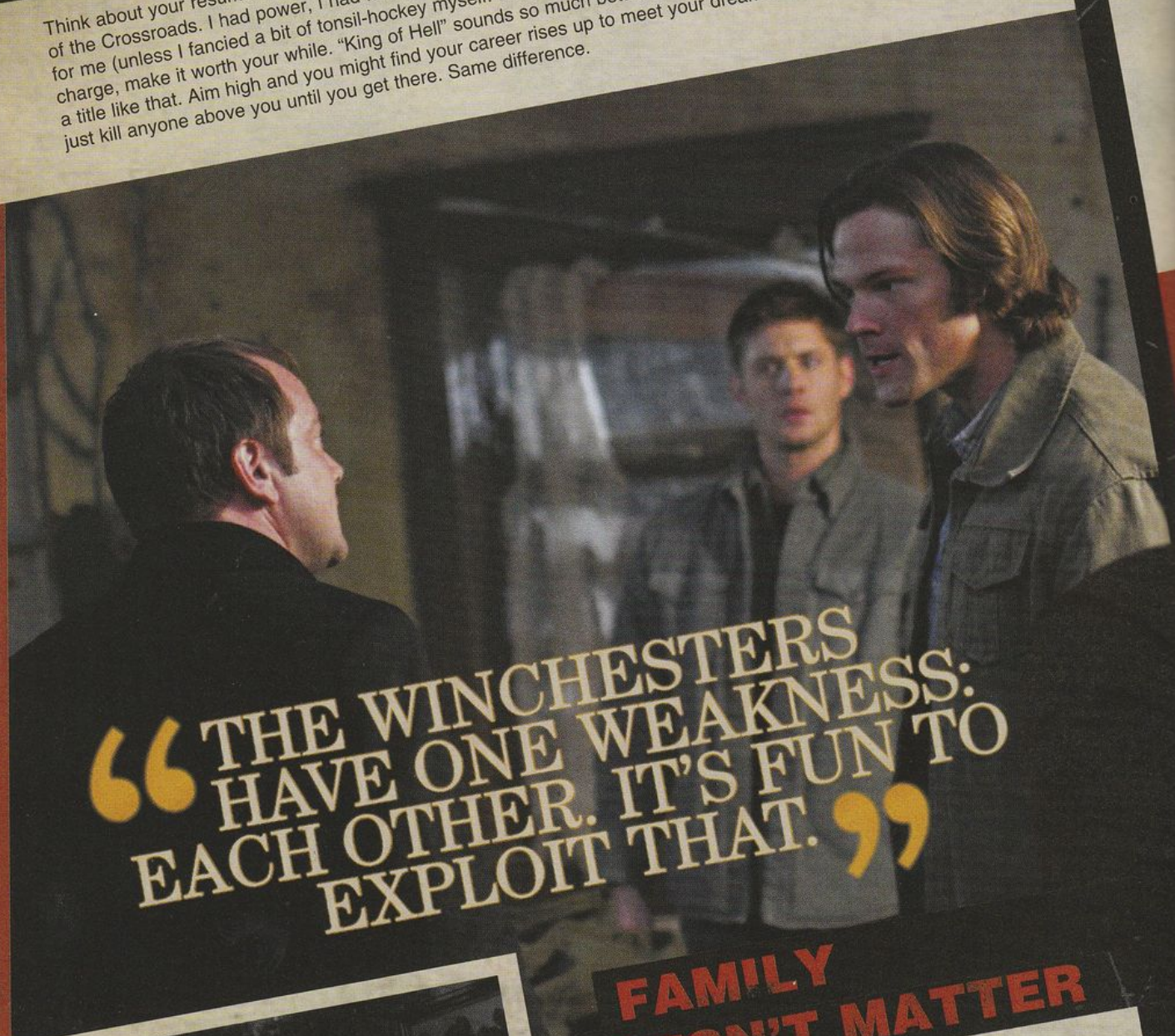
**WORDS: CROWLEY**
(as related to Jayne Nelson)

**You don't get to be King of Hell without knowing how to get ahead in life (or after that, more to the point). So, who better to share his own particular brand of self-help with us than that silver-tongued demon, Crowley? *The Official Supernatural Magazine* met up with him at our nearest crossroads to find out how he does it.***

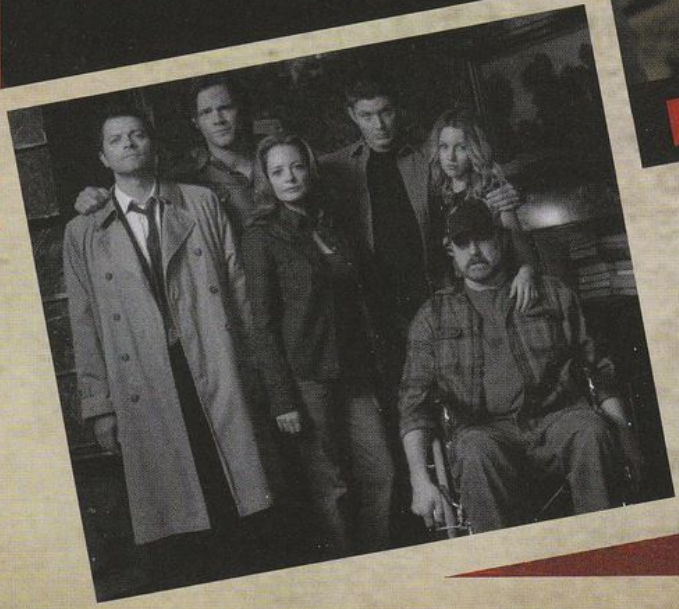
* Please note: This guide details the personal opinions of Crowley, a demon, and *The Official Supernatural Magazine* does not endorse any of this behavior!

## AIM HIGH

Think about your resume. Mine used to say "King of the Crossroads". That was good – I liked being King of the Crossroads. I had power, I had fame, I had an army of underlings who used to do all the deal-kissing for me (unless I fancied a bit of tonsil-hockey myself. It's good to be the King). But if you're going to be in charge, make it worth your while. "King of Hell" sounds so much better, doesn't it? You can't argue with a title like that. Aim high and you might find your career rises up to meet your dreams – and if it doesn't, just kill anyone above you until you get there. Same difference.



"THE WINCHESTERS HAVE ONE WEAKNESS: EACH OTHER. IT'S FUN TO EXPLOIT THAT."



## FAMILY DOESN'T MATTER

Ah, family. What a royal pain in the arse they can be! The Winchesters have one weakness: each other. It's fun to exploit that. The angels are all about family too, but the fallout from that brotherly bickering up in Heaven nearly set off the Apocalypse.

So I say: sod all that! I say that family should be nothing to you. Back when I was still a miserable human, my misbegotten son and I hated each other like Tom hated Jerry, only there weren't enough anvils falling on his head for my liking. Revel in being alone and you'll go a long, long way... and nobody will be able to use your family against you, either. Look out for number one, and number one is where you'll be!

## MUST LIKE DOGS

When you're a demon there's one thing you can rely on: that you can't rely on anybody. Other demons will backstab and double-deal; humans are a waste of space; angels... well, don't get me started on bloody angels. But there's one creature who'll remain loyal to you no matter what, and that's your dog. I'm not talking about those pansy little lapdogs, either – I'm talking about the kind of dog who could drool on a chihuahua and drown it in two seconds flat. Hellhounds, people, hellhounds! With a few of these blighters by your side you can take on anybody. Just make sure yours is bigger... although that applies to *so much* in life, doesn't it?

## LOOK GOOD

Never underestimate the importance of a good suit. If you want to command respect, authority and gravitas, nothing can help you more than a great piece of tailoring (well, there's also torture, but that's a given). Sophistication – that's what's missing from the world these days. Pride in your appearance. Look at those flipping Winchesters: denim, plaid shirts, layers, layers, layers. No wonder nobody takes them seriously; they look like a couple of farm hands!

You need to look as though you spend your days sitting behind a desk doing deals so important that the rest of the measly maggots on the Earth could barely understand them; you need to look as though you could walk through the flames of Hell and come out unsinged. Which, in my case, is true. So make sure you have a good tailor, and make doubly sure that nobody eats him. Happened to me once. I was devastated.

## IMBIBE WITH PRIDE

Coffee? Get lost. Beer? Bugger off. You shouldn't let anything slip past your lips except Scotch, and make it the good stuff while you're at it. Not that I'm encouraging alcoholism here – oh no. I know that not everybody has the constitution of a 450-year-old demon like me. But I despair when I see so much bilgewater passing for booze these days. Refine your tastes! You need to look good on the outside and feel good on the inside. Whisky burns all the way down. I'm the King of Hell. Burning's kind of my thing. It should be yours, too.

# PAY ATTENTION TO THE SMALL PRINT

After centuries of making deals, there's one thing I've learnt: you can trick anyone out of anything – especially their soul – if you put some sneaky little clauses in their contracts. Most of the poor schlubs who sell me their immortal souls don't even know how to read the terms and conditions, even when they should know better (Bobby Singer, I'm looking at you). You might think that writing contracts is dull, but you'd be amazed at what you can sneak into one... and the wails of despair when your clients realize what you've done is always a riot. If I had a dollar for every time I heard someone bleat, "But it's not fair!" I'd be... well, I'd probably be just as rich as I am now, but you get my drift. It's good to be bad!

# GOAD, DEMEAN AND BELITTLE

Never, ever pass up an opportunity to make someone feel small. Insult them with a smile, so they're still processing what you've just said while you move on to other things. Call them names, but do it cleverly. Find out their secrets and embarrass them. It's all schoolyard stuff, of course, but you'd be amazed how much a few well-chosen words can smart; how a few barbed comments can fester under the skin. I'm sure Sam Winchester is still muttering about me calling him "moose", for example. And remember how I took a photo of me and Bobby Singer lip-locking our deal, just so I could show it to his pals? Ah, good times...

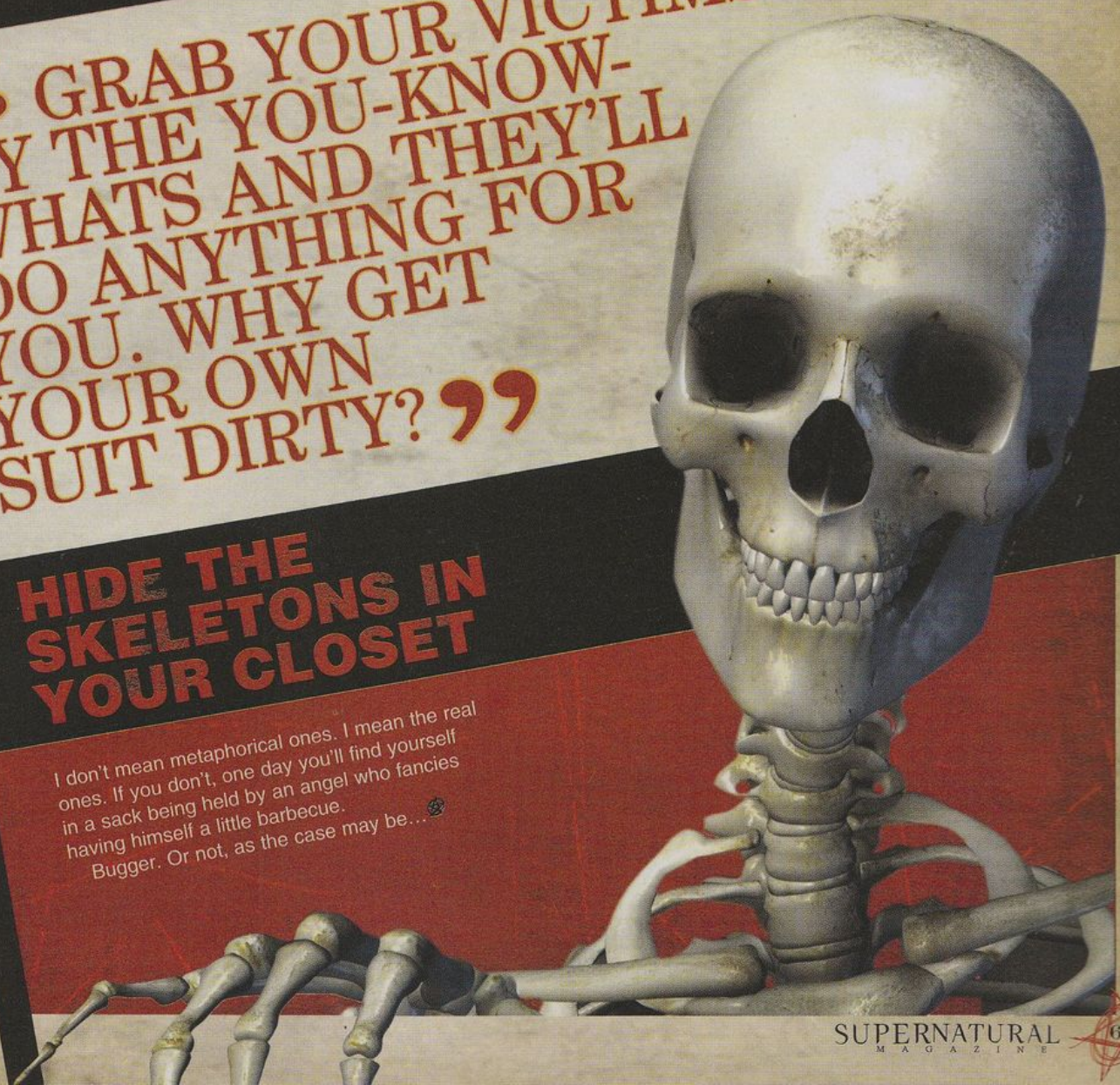
## PLAY CHESS

I don't mean the actual game, the one with all those horseys and knights and all that bollocks. No, I mean play chess with *people*. Use them as your pawns and move them around your own, personal chessboard. Use blackmail and torture if necessary, or just trick them any way you can, but get others to do your dirty work for you. An example: I wanted a fine collection of alphas to interrogate so I could find Purgatory, and I got that old coot Samuel Winchester to find them for me by promising him his beloved daughter. I even got Dean and his moose to go on hunts for me by holding Sam's soul as collateral. Get my drift? Grab your victims by the you-know-whats and they'll do anything for you. Why get your own suit dirty?

## THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

The 'box', in this particular case, just so happens to be Hell; I may be its King, but it's too small for me. Other demons (or angels, in the case of Lucifer) might be content with a Hell that's too small to swing some entrails in, but I'm not. I want to be able to swing *everything*. I think big, see, and every good businessman knows that real estate is important. Hence my hunt for Purgatory. So, let this be a lesson to you. Expand those horizons, people! Don't let your limited means stop you from acquiring more! (Also, if you actually know where Purgatory is, drop me a line... Cheers.)

> "GRAB YOUR VICTIMS BY THE YOU-KNOW-WHATS AND THEY'LL DO ANYTHING FOR YOU. WHY GET YOUR OWN SUIT DIRTY?"



## HIDE THE SKELETONS IN YOUR CLOSET

I don't mean metaphorical ones. I mean the real ones. If you don't, one day you'll find yourself in a sack being held by an angel who fancies having himself a little barbecue.

Bugger. Or not, as the case may be...